

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

The above-identified patent application has been reviewed in light of the Examiner's Action dated March 27, 2007. Claim 5 has been amended, Claims 17-20 have been cancelled, Claims 1-4 were previously withdrawn and Claims 21-24 have been added. Accordingly, Claims 5, 7, 8 and 21-24 are now pending. The Examiner has objected to the specification and the drawings. Claims 5, 7, 12 and 13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite. Claims 10-12, 15 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Orberg et al. Claims 10, 11 and 13-16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Ball. Claims 5, 7, 8, 10-13, 15 and 16 have been rejected under 35 USC § 103 as being unpatentable over a combination of Minnick and Ball. Finally, the Examiner has stated that Claims 6 and 9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that Claims 6 and 9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has adopted the Examiner's suggestion and now presents the subject matter of Claim 6 in amended Claim 5 and the subject matter of Claim 9 in new Claim 21. Applicant respectfully requests the favorable consideration of such redrafted claims and the allowance thereof.

***Restriction Requirement***

The Examiner has stated that the invention of Claims 5-9 has been constructively elected and has withdrawn Claims 17-20. Accordingly, Claims 17-20 have been cancelled.

***Objections to the Drawings***

The Examiner has objected to the proposed drawing correction filed February 14, 2007. The originally filed figures, the corrections of the figures submitted July 2, 2004, the corrections of the figures submitted June 27, 2005, and the corrections of the figures submitted November 3, 2005 have been reviewed and the Replacement Sheet included herewith is believed to address all prior drawing

corrections. More specifically, upon review of the many drawing amendments, reference number "56" has been removed and newly-presented reference number "80" has been added. An annotated Sheet has been included herewith to show the drawing amendments. Additionally, the reference numbers of Figs. 2 and 3 have been made informal to enhance their readability. The reference numbers will be made formal subsequent to receipt of a Notice of Allowance. No new matter has been added on account of such amendments.

***Objections to the Specification***

The Examiner has objected to specification because it allegedly lacks detailed disclosure for reference numbers "37A", "37B", "56", "61" and "68". The figures were previously amended to remove reference numbers "37A", "37B" and "61". The disclosure for reference numbers "37A", "37B", "56" and "61" was removed in an Office Action Response June 27, 2006. Reference Number "56" has been removed in the instant amendment. Finally, the specification has been amended to provide a detailed description related to reference Number "68".

The Examiner has objected to the specification as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the term "interior threads" of Claim 5, the subject matter set forth in Claims 6, 9, 11 and 14, and "surface area" set forth in Claim 10. With respect to Claim 5, "interior threads" has been indicated as reference number "62" as shown on page 4, line 9 of the originally-filed specification. Review of the various amendments indicate that "62" has not been deleted from the specification. With respect to the subject matter of Claims 6 and 9 (now presented in amended Claim 5 and new Claim 21), new reference Number "80" has been added with corresponding detailed description. It is believed that the remainder of the elements of Claims 6 and 9 have been adequately covered in the disclosure. The objections to Claims 10, 11 and 14 have been rendered moot by the cancellation (without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof) of such claims.

***Claim rejections - 35 USC § 112***

Claims 5, 7, 10, 12 and 13 have been rejected as being indefinite. Claim 5 has been amended to address the apparent confusion between threadingly engaged and interconnected. It is believed

that the amendment to Claim 5 also addresses the alleged indefiniteness of Claim 7. The rejections to Claims 10, 12 and 13 have been rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims.

***Claim rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The Examiner has rejected Claims 10-12, 15 and 16 as being anticipated by Orberg et al. The rejections to Claims 10-12, 15 and 16 have been rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims (without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof). Applicant specifically traverses the Examiner's statements regarding the teachings of Orberg et al. and the non-novelty of the invention claimed in Claims 10-12, 15 and 16 based thereon. That is, Applicant reserves the right to address the teachings of the reference and its applicability to the claims in a future office action related to the above-identified application or in a related patent application.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 10, 11 and 13-16 as being anticipated by Ball. The rejections to Claims 10, 11 and 13-16 have been rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims (without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof). However, Applicant traverses the Examiner's statements regarding the teachings of Ball and the non-novelty of the invention claimed in Claims 10, 11 and 13-16. That is, Applicant reserves the right to address the teachings of the reference in its applicability to the claims in a future office action related to the above-identified application or in a related patent application.

***Claim rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The Examiner has rejected Claims 5, 7, 8, 10-13, 15 and 16 as being obvious in view of a combination of Minnick and Ball. As the Examiner has indicated that Claims 6 and 9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, Applicant has adopted the Examiner's suggestion and has added to independent Claim 5 the elements of Claim 6. The elements of Claims 5 and 9 have been included in new Claim 21. Similarly, Claims 6 and 9 have been cancelled. Therefore, all pending claims are now believed allowable and non-obvious in view of Minnick and Ball. The rejections to Claims 10-13, 15 and 16 have been rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims (without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof). Applicant, however, traverses the

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Examiner's statements regarding the teachings of Minnick and Ball and the alleged obviousness of the invention claimed in Claims 10-13, 15 and 16. That is, Applicant reserves the right to address the teachings of these references in its applicability to the claims in a future office action related to the above-identified application or in a related patent application.

**Conclusion**

Based at least upon the foregoing, Applicant believes that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. Since the undersigned has been recently retained by the Applicant, it is believed that a telephone interview would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance. Thus it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned at his earliest convenience if any concerns exist with respect to this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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Annotated Sheet

